

VZCZCXYZ0000  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMS #0052 0221302  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 221302Z JAN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHFSI/DIR FSINFATC WASHDC  
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9173

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000052

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FSI FOR LFOX  
DEPT FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [AFSI](#) [AFSN](#) [AMGT](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: MUSCAT'S NOMINEE FOR 2008 ECONOMIC TRAINING COURSE

REF: STATE 2612

Embassy nominates Sarah Abdullah al-Riyami, Commercial Assistant, to attend the FSN Economic Training Course (PE 220), to be held at FSI on April 7-18, 2008. Following responses are keyed to reftel request:

- [1](#)A. Sarah Abdullah al-Riyami, FSN-7
- [1](#)B. Omani
- [1](#)C. 10767177
- [1](#)D. State
- [1](#)E. Commercial Assistant
- [1](#)F. Brian Grimm, GrimmBM@state.gov
- [1](#)G. University of Missouri - St. Louis, BA in Communications, minor in Business Administration. Sarah is the Embassy's Commercial Assistant. As such, she promotes U.S. exports, coordinates trade promotion events, serves as the Embassy's primary interface with the local business community (including the fielding of doing-business concerns and questions on business regulations), and researches potential export opportunities and Omani partners on behalf of U.S. firms. Before joining the Embassy, Sarah previously worked as a computer consultant for the University of Missouri - St. Louis, and as an events marketer for Bonneville St. Louis Radio Group.
- [1](#)H. Sarah's attendance at this course could not be more timely for the Embassy, as the U.S. and Oman are moving forward on plans to implement a bilateral free trade agreement by the end of the first quarter of 2008. As we move into new era of bilateral trade relations, we are receiving an increased number of inquiries regarding the provisions of the FTA, including enhanced intellectual property protections, more expedient customs clearance processes, investment protections, treatment for U.S. companies on par with their Omani counterparts, and liberalized telecommunications regulations, among others.

The Embassy's economic staff is small, however, with one Economic/Commercial officer and one FSN Commercial Assistant.

The Embassy did have an Economic/Commercial Assistant, but that position has since been eliminated due to staffing cuts.

Having the Commercial Assistant, who functions as the primary interface with the commercial community, well-versed in trade and strategic sector issues will enable the Embassy to assist more efficiently businesses that have questions and concerns regarding the provisions of the FTA. Furthermore, Sarah has expressed strong interest in taking on the duties of the Economic Assistant position. The Embassy would

benefit from her eagerness to enhance her skill set in this regard, as it would expand the Embassy's ability to report on economic developments in Oman.

I. For course content, Embassy would appreciate that emphasis be placed on bilateral trade agreements, with particular focus on FTA implementation. Embassy further requests that the course highlights growth sectors pertinent to Oman, including energy, telecommunications, and water. Intellectual property rights development are also very important, as Oman moves to implement new regulations concerning copyrights and industrial property.

J. Embassy believes that the listing of skill and subject areas in reftel would prepare our Commercial Assistant for greater responsibilities.

K. Sarah has not previously attended FSI courses.  
FONTENEAU